

Adjournment Debate

been providing Canadians with various long-term job creation programs. The Local Employment Assistance Program, for instance, has helped many jobless Canadians set up businesses that, after termination of Government financial assistance, continued to be so successful that they are still employing thousands of Canadians today. As the Minister said before in the House, the Government has redoubled its efforts this year to substantially increase funding for job creation, with special emphasis on long-term job creation projects. One of the strategies that will help us achieve this objective consists in increased involvement of the private sector in joint job creation efforts. When businesses realized that the NEED program could help them prepare for economic recovery through activities involving expansion, modernization and pre-production, they supported this program wholeheartedly, and participation in the program has increased. The success of NEED has been such that in many cases, when projects were terminated, short-term jobs were converted into permanent additional jobs.

The consolidation of direct job creation programs undertaken by the Department and effective as of September 12, 1983, places even greater emphasis on the private sector involvement already begun under the NEED program. The information kit on Canada Works, distributed to all Members by the Minister, makes it quite clear that private sector projects will be encouraged this coming winter. The Local Employment Assistance and Development Program (LEAD) provides fund for creating LEAD corporations, whose purpose is to promote the creation of new businesses or expand existing ones. The businesses and jobs created in this manner are set up in such a way that they can continue to operate after the Government financing period expires. The Job Corps program will be used to finance businesses, organizations, communities and individuals for periods of up to three years in order to create full-time jobs for individuals experiencing serious problems in finding a job. The Career-Access Program, through wage subsidies, enables employers to provide employment opportunities for those who have trouble finding employment. Here again, it is felt that many jobs may be continued after the initial financing period. As the Hon. Member can see, the Government has launched a number of projects and is redoubling its efforts to increase the number of long-term jobs. As the Minister himself has indicated, nearly \$1.5 billion will be spent this year and next year on creating jobs for over 300,000 unemployed Canadians.

[English]

THE ADMINISTRATION—PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE OF MINISTERS. (B) INTERDEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Mr. Speaker, all of us in the House are familiar with the phenomenon of the Government changing the order of the Treasury benches. We witnessed it particularly last summer when the former Minister of Transport became the new Minister of State for External Relations (Mr. Pepin), when the Minister of the Environment became the Minister of Employment and

Immigration (Mr. Roberts) and when the Minister of Employment and Immigration became the Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy). We had a shuffling of chairs like that on the deck of *The Titanic* which has not made much of a difference, in terms of the policy of the Government. That particular practice raises a very important point regarding the security of information which ought to be at the disposal of Canadian citizens.

We in the House understand the practice that when a Minister is transferred from one portfolio to another we are not allowed to ask him questions about his previous responsibilities. We understand that, but I do not know if the Canadian public understands that very well. The corollary to it relates to the information he has built up over the years of his responsibility in the previous portfolio. For example, the former Minister of Transport built up a considerable dossier of file of information with people across Canada relative to his responsibilities in that portfolio. We understand that when he left that portfolio to go to his new one he was entitled to take all his personal correspondence with him, that which is labelled "personal".

● (1810)

That is why I very specifically asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) last Friday the definition of "personal correspondence", because that becomes a very operative and critical definition if the rights of citizens are to be protected in relation to the retrieval of information about themselves. The freedom of access to information measure really becomes useless if we cannot retrieve information which that particular Act says we can have access to, because it was non-existent. Is it possible for a Minister of the Crown when leaving a particular responsibility to go to a new Department to take his so-called personal correspondence with him and shred it? Can he shred information that might relate to the rights and privileges of private citizens all across Canada? My question to the Prime Minister very simply dealt with that.

I would like to add corollaries to that. Hopefully one of the two Parliamentary Secretaries here can answer the particular question. What are the guidelines, if any, that have been established by the Prime Minister for his Cabinet Ministers defining personal correspondence? Correspondence between a Minister and private citizens on issues relating to his portfolio, is that considered personal correspondence? Can he take it with him when he leaves that responsibility making it unavailable to anyone else? Correspondence between a Minister and departmental officials regarding a submission by a private citizen, is that considered personal correspondence? Can you imagine the awesome nightmare of trying to help our constituents regarding their dealings with a Minister in his previous responsibility if all that information has been taken away and shredded? There is no such thing as retrieval of that information. Freedom of access to information really becomes a bizarre term if that access is no longer there because the information no longer exists.